
Walt Stanchfield 34

Notes from Walt Stanchfield's Disney Drawing Classes

“From the living model to the living gesture”

by Walt Stanchfield

“From the living model to the living gesture”

FROM THE LIVING MODEL TO THE LIVING GESTURE

A scene of animation is more or less a series of gesture drawings. The difference being that an animator's drawing is likely to have some things in it that are not associated with still drawings. For instance, an animation drawing might have some overlapping action, some drag, some squash and stretch; a stance that may be off balance, or a view that one would avoid or adjust in a still drawing.. But basically the extremes in a scene of animation are gestural drawings created to fit the needs of the story.

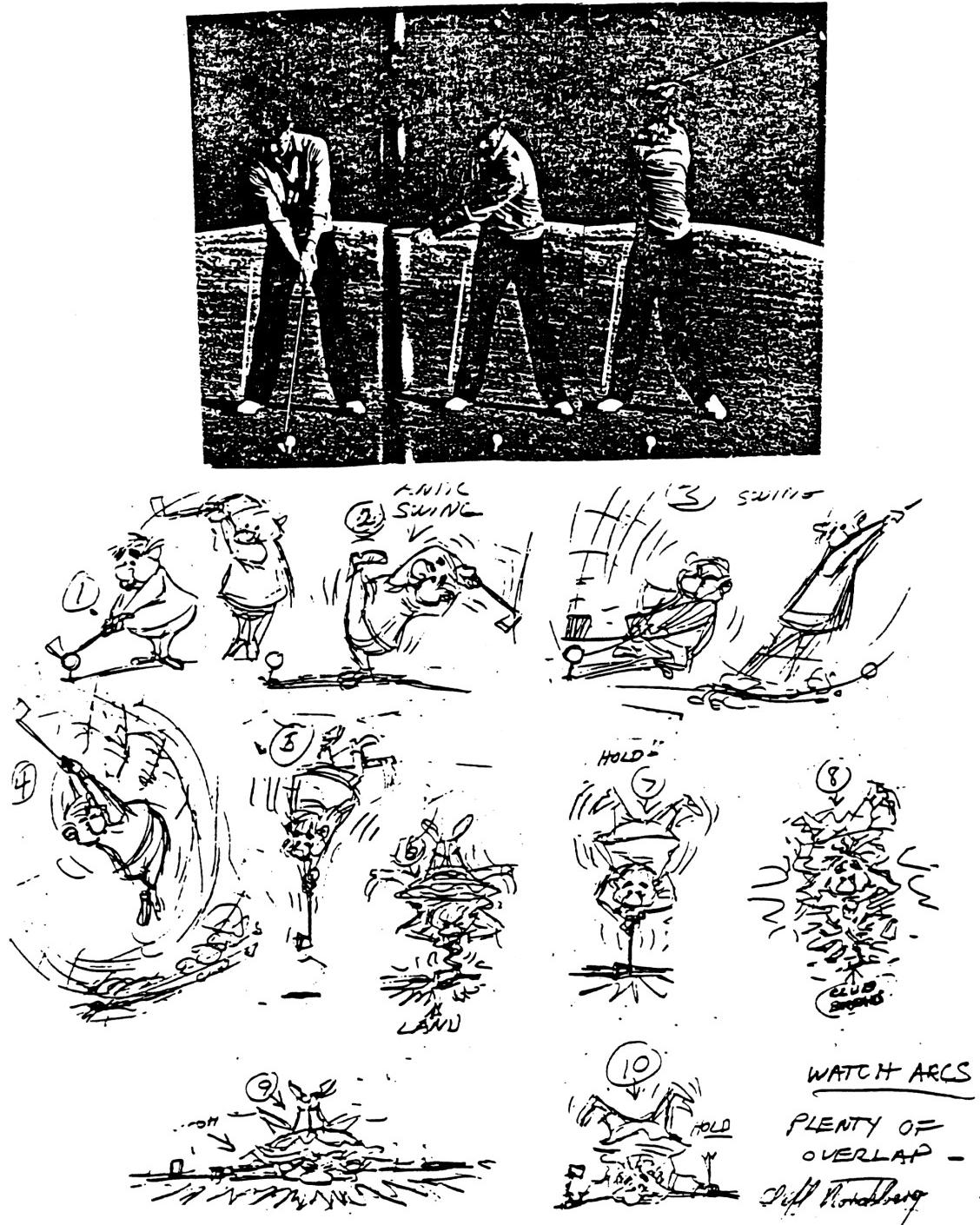
In the case of using live action as a basis for animation, the animator soon learns that tracings of the photostats will not suffice. Here is where his ability to understand and draw gestures really hits pay dirt. I have seen scenes where the photostats had been practically traced, and the scene was lifeless. One of the reasons for this is that live action actors do not move from extreme to extreme as animation characters do. Studying live action clips will reveal that many actors mince through their parts like a cloud changing shapes in a breezy sky. Often though, actors are used whose gestures are broad and crisp, making the animator's job much easier.

So I guess what I'm driving at is the importance of studying a live model for gesture, and of realizing that the extremes used in animation should have the same care of investigation and thoroughness as do the study drawings. That is why I continually suggest (implore) that you do not attempt to copy the model, but rather capture and draw the gesture.

Somewhere I read, "Whenever a photograph contains the principles and disciplines of the artist, the better it will be; but the more a drawing looks like a photograph, the worse it will be." Also, and I paraphrase, "Draw verbs, not nouns." A noun being a thing that can be named; a verb being that thing given the breath of life.

Walt

“From the living model to the living gesture”



Cliff Nordberg was a master at carrying things a little beyond the camera's viewpoint.

"From the living model to the living gesture"



A couple of typical human gestures carried to delightfully humorous extremes by -- Milt Kahl